



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Mitt Romney, Governor ♦ Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor ♦ Jane Wallis Gumble, Director

DHCD Section 8 Administrative Plan Amendment: 2005-01

Programs: ALL
Effective Date: March 29, 2005

Purpose: This amendment modifies DHCD's policy on the voucher term and extensions.

Administrative Plan Amendment 2003-01 is repealed as of the effective date of this amendment.

In Section 4. Issuing and Leasing, delete sections 4.1.1 through 4.1.3.3 in their entirety and replace with the following:

4 Issuing and Leasing*

The provisions of this section pertain both to applicants and to participants on the clock.

4.1.1 Initial Term

The initial term of the voucher is 60 days.

4.1.2 Extensions of Initial Term

If funds are available, the RAA will grant a family one 30-day extension upon written request. If funds are not available, the RAA may freeze the voucher until the extension can be granted. Depending on the amount of time the voucher is frozen, the RAA may require the family to re-verify program eligibility.

An RAA may require the voucher holder to submit documentation of housing search efforts in order to grant an initial 30 day extension. In instances where the voucher holder fails to provide a search log acceptable to the RAA, the extension request may be denied. Any RAA that requires a housing search log to obtain the first 30 day extension must provide notice of this requirement in writing at the briefing. The notice must clearly inform the applicant of search log requirements and state that failure to provide this information will result in expiration of the voucher after the initial 60 days.

If a participant on-the-clock has not found a unit after 60 days the RAA must refer the participant to the HCEC resource room for assistance.

4.1.3 Extensions Beyond 90 Days

Extension requests beyond 90 days must be supported by a documented housing search effort. Documentation of diligent search efforts must be acceptable to the RAA. For reasonable accommodation cases, the documentation must demonstrate that the voucher holder was unable to find housing as a result of their disability.

4.1.3.1 Extensions Beyond 90 Days for Reasonable Accommodation

If funds are available, on a case-by case basis, RAAs may extend the cumulative voucher term beyond 90 days, to provide a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.

4.1.3.2 Extensions Beyond 90 Days for Other Good Cause

If funds are available, on a case-by case basis a one-time extension of 30 days may be granted for other good cause as determined by the RAA provided the family submits a detailed housing log showing that they are engaged in a diligent housing search in three different cities or towns and have submitted at least one RFTA in the first 90 days.

Other good cause may include but is not limited to the following:

- Voucher holder has been unable to find a unit for reasons related to a domestic violence situation;
- Voucher holder is in a homeless shelter and despite diligent search efforts has been unable to find a unit; or,
- Voucher holder has recently obtained housing search assistance and is likely to find a unit if one more extension is granted.
- Voucher holder is a hard-to-house family needing 3 or more bedrooms.
- Voucher holder is on the clock as a result of owner non-compliance with HQS.

4.1.3.3 Procedure

Extension requests must be submitted to the RAA in writing by the expiration date unless the voucher holder can demonstrate that mitigating circumstances prevented the request from being filed on time.

To ensure consistency, each RAA must designate one person in a supervisory position who will be responsible for reviewing and making decisions on all requests.

Decisions on extensions are not subject to informal reviews or hearings and cannot be appealed to DHCD.

4.1.3.4 Progress report requirement

At any time during the extended term the RAA may require the family to report its progress in leasing a unit. At a minimum, the report should indicate where the family looked for a unit and why it was rejected.

RAAs are encouraged to require a progress report for all extensions, particularly where the family is "hard-to-house" or has self-identified as having a disability. Review of a family's progress report will provide the RAA with evidence of a diligent housing search and will facilitate review of any future requests for extension by the family. A family's progress report may also be used proactively to reveal situations of possible prohibited discrimination where a family is repeatedly denied housing.

4.1.3.3 Freezing the Voucher

At any time, the RAA may be required by DHCD to freeze any active voucher due to lack of funding. In this instance, as soon as funds become available, these vouchers will be unfrozen for the balance of time remaining on the voucher. If funding permits, the extension opportunities described above may be made available to those households whose voucher has been unfrozen. Families with frozen vouchers will be given priority in funding before any applicant not yet issued a voucher.